

Washington, DC - A bipartisan group of U.S. House members today wrote President Obama in support of Governor Cuomo's request for a major disaster declaration following severe flooding in 26 upstate New York counties. The flooding, which began on April 26, badly damaged homes and businesses. Over \$38 million in infrastructure damage and debris removal costs have been identified, providing additional burdens to cash-strapped local and state governments. The letter was authored signed by Reps. Maurice Hinchey (NY-22), Chris Gibson (NY-20), Richard Hanna (NY-24), Bill Owens (NY-23), Tom Reed (NY-29), Ann Marie Buerkle (NY-25) and Louise Slaughter (NY-28).

"We can attest to the extensive damage impacting the homes, businesses, and local infrastructure in the flooded areas and the serious personal losses experienced by local residents," wrote the four House members. "Families have waited patiently for federal assistance for more than one month. Meanwhile, local governments are struggling to find funding to repair roads, culverts, bridges and other infrastructure damaged or destroyed. Without assistance from the federal government, many local leaders question how they will be able to make necessary repairs, the cost of which far exceeds local resources."

The requested declaration would provide vital federal assistance in helping local governments, businesses and individuals rebuild from the storms. The affected counties include Allegany, Broome, Cayuga, Chemung, Chenango, Clinton, Delaware, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Herkimer, Lewis, Madison, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Ulster, Washington, Warren, and Yates.

A PDF of the letter to President Obama can be found [here](#). The text of the letter follows:

May 26, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write in support of Governor Cuomo's request for a major disaster declaration as a result of severe storms and flooding that began on April 26, 2011 and impacted 26 counties across New York State.

The storms and flooding that struck parts of New York State in April and May have wrought a tremendous amount of damage to both public and individual property and comprehensive assistance is vitally needed in order to allow families and local municipalities to deal with the staggering damage and financial losses they have incurred. A joint FEMA-State assessment team identified more than \$38 million in infrastructure damage and debris removal costs. The same team found severe damage to more than 1,000 homes.

We can attest to the extensive damage impacting homes, businesses, and local infrastructure in the flooded areas and the serious personal losses experienced by local residents. Families have waited patiently for federal assistance for more than one month. Meanwhile, local governments are struggling to find funding to repair roads, culverts, bridges and other infrastructure damaged or destroyed. Without assistance from the federal government, many local leaders question how they will be able to make necessary repairs, the cost of which far exceeds local resources.

We hope that you will consider the serious damage caused by severe storms that began on April 26, 2011 and approve Governor Cuomo's major disaster declaration request. To the residents and communities of New York State, the appropriate declaration and resultant federal assistance is vital to enabling them to rebuild from the storms.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Maurice Hinchey
Chris Gibson

Richard Hanna
Bill Owens
Tom Reed
Ann Marie Buerkle
Louise Slaughter